

7- Resurrection and New Creation: Rom 8:12-39

Kirk continues to demonstrate himself to be a gifted and insightful exegete. His reading of Romans is really quite intelligent and one is almost always on the verge, teetering towards being persuaded by him. Yet, there are nagging difficulties and doubts that seem to spring up from time to time that leave one wishing to be persuaded but not.

For instance, I was happily reading along in this, the 7th chapter, when, in his discussion of 8:12-30 Kirk writes 'Paul is reinterpreting a Jewish eschatological vision that portrays the world to come (*Endzeit*) as a (super-) restoration of the original creation (*Urzeit*).' The note to this remarks 'On the correspondence between *Endzeit* and *Urzeit* see W.D. Davies...' (p. 138). But of course the originator of the *Urzeit* – *Endzeit* observation was Herman Gunkel- yet one looks in vain for any reference to Gunkel and his name is absent from the index. Does Kirk imagine that Davies came up with the meticulously worked out thesis of Gunkel? Or is Gunkel simply deemed unworthy of mention. Davies may have borrowed from Gunkel, but Gunkel clearly deserves credit.

This latter point may seem unnecessary, but it demonstrates to me that Kirk may have holes in his training which should have been noted and corrected somewhere along the way. If Kirk doesn't know Gunkel's work, what other very relevant piece of data is lacking in the construction of his skeleton key?

Next, Kirk seems to have adopted what the theologians have rightly called 'adoptionism'- the belief that Jesus wasn't the Son of God until adopted as such by God. Kirk writes 'Jesus arrived at his state of sonship along the road of death and resurrection' (p. 140). Does K. mean to imply that before that time Jesus wasn't the Son of God?

But all is not lost. Kirk astutely observes a few pages on, 'The restoration of creation begins with the resurrection of Christ. In this he is the second Adam, determining the future of creation and of the humanity which God sets over it' (p. 142). That, reader, is a fantastic observation and its theological implications are massive.

Kirk concludes by noting '... Paul's theodicy project gives precisely this content to the righteousness of God: God is faithful to his people in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus' (p. 159). This may be true but Paul is more interested in Romans in more than justifying God's behavior. In point of fact, it has to be wondered whether what we call 'theodicy' was an issue for Paul at all. It may have been- but one has the sense that Paul would have, like Luther, kissed God's hand even if he tossed him into hell. Indeed, he would himself lose his own salvation if his people could be saved in his place. That doesn't sound like the thoughts of a person who wonders if God is fair. Still, Kirk has plenty of time to convince me- as several chapters remain.